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(54) Methods and apparatus for continuous control and protection of media content

(57) A novel method and apparatus for protection of streamed media content is disclosed. The apparatus includes control means for governance of content streams or objects, decryption means for decrypting content streams or objects under control of the control means, and feedback means for tracking actual use of content streams or objects. The control means may operate in accordance with rule received as part of the streamed content, or through a side-band channel. The rules may specify allowed uses of the content, including whether or not the content can be copied or transferred, and whether and under what circumstances received con-

tent may be "checked out" of one device and used in a second device. The rules may also include or specify budgets, and a requirement that audit information be collected and/or transmitted to an external server. The apparatus may include a media player designed to call plugins to assist in rendering content. A "trust plugin" and its use are disclosed so that a media player designed for use with unprotected content may render protected content without the necessity of requiring any changes to the media player. The streamed content may be in a number of different formats, including MPEG-4, MP3, and the RMFF format.

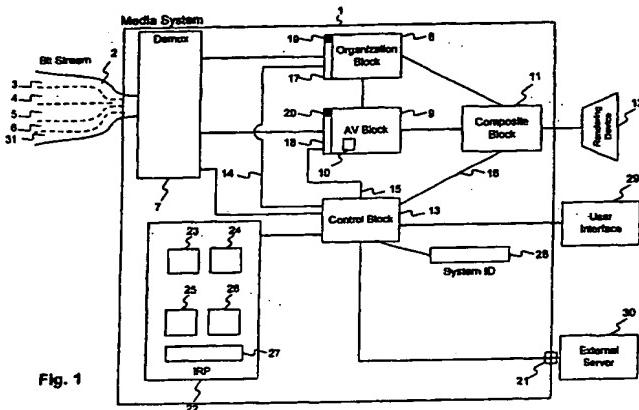


Fig. 1



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
04 07 8395

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Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner			
The Hague	15 February 2005	Hampson, F			
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS					
X : particularly relevant if taken alone	T : theory or principle underlying the invention				
Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category	E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date				
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O : non-written disclosure	L : document cited for other reasons				
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